



Clone Town Britain

The loss of local identity on the nation's high streets

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We aim to improve quality of life by promoting innovative solutions that challenge mainstream thinking on economic, environmental and social issues. We work in partnership and put people and the planet first.



economics
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means well-being

Current priorities include international debt, transforming markets, global finance and local economic renewal



environment
lifestyles must
become sustainable

Current priorities are climate change, ecological debt and local sustainability



society
communities need
power and influence

Current priorities include democracy, time banks, well-being and public services

nef (the new economics foundation) is a registered charity founded in 1986 by the leaders of The Other Economic Summit (TOES), which forced issues such as international debt onto the agenda of the G7/G8 summit meetings. It has taken a lead in helping establish new coalitions and organisations, such as the Jubilee 2000 debt campaign; the Ethical Trading Initiative; the UK Social Investment Forum; and new ways to measure social and environmental well-being.



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Attack of the clones

This report launches a national survey to find out why the places that we live and shop seem to be turning into clone towns. At the end of it we hope to know how far the problem has gone and what can be done about it. Here we illustrate the trend by looking at Britain against a global backdrop, and highlight some of the ways in which interest and diversity could be restored to our high streets.

In 2002, **nef** (the new economics foundation) published the groundbreaking report *Ghost Town Britain*. It shows how, over the past two decades, the construction of large out-of-town shopping centres and waves of high-street bank-branch closures have driven many people away from town-centre shopping, resulting in the loss of thousands of independent traders. *Ghost Town Britain* shows that we are losing our high-streets as we have known them. Unable to compete on an unfair playing field, local retail is going up against the wall. The statistics are stark:

- General stores closing at the rate of one per day.
- Between 1997 and 2002 specialist stores like butchers, bakers and fishmongers shut at the rate of 50 per week.
- Twenty traditional (non-chain) pubs are closing per month.
- Between 1992 and 2002, Britain lost one third of its bank-branch network – leaving nearly 1000 communities across the UK with no access to a local bank.

In the place of real local shops has come a near-identical package of chain stores replicating on the nation's high streets. As a result, the individual character of many of our town centres is evaporating. Retail spaces once filled with independent butchers, newsagents, tobacconists, pubs, book shops, greengrocers and family-owned general stores are becoming filled with supermarket retailers, fast-food chains, and global fashion outlets. Many town centres that have undergone substantial regeneration have even lost the distinctive facades of their high streets, as local building materials have been swapped in favour of identical glass, steel, and concrete storefronts that provide the ideal degree of sterility to house a string of big, clone town retailers. It's a phenomenon that affects people whether they are rich or poor, as Nick Foulkes pointed out writing in the London *Evening Standard*, "The homogenisation of our high streets is a crime against our culture. The smart ones get the international clones – Ralph Lauren, DKNY, Starbucks and Gap; while those lower down the socio-economic hierarchy end up with Nando's, McDonald's, Blockbuster and Ladbrokes."¹

The assault on the character of town centres has been aided by planning and regeneration decisions that have drawn shoppers away from the high street and created a retail infrastructure hostile to small, independent businesses. At one stage in the battle by supermarkets to deregulate community pharmacies in their own favour, Tesco even argued that they should be allowed to have an in-store pharmacy because they constituted, themselves, a community.



The phenomenon was summarised by architecture critic, Jonathan Glancey. In 2002 he lamented the impact of decades of thoughtless planning. “We have replaced our busy streets with hermetic office blocks, gated shopping precincts and bland chain stores that belong to councils and corporations but not to the people,” wrote Glancey. “At the same time we have tended to strip our town and city centres of old street markets and family-run businesses and to pedestrianise what were once lively shopping streets, creating urban deserts, especially after dark.”²

In June 2003, the Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE) produced a report entitled *The Lie of the Land*, which warns that disastrous planning strategies are killing the character of Britain’s market towns. The report highlights the results from a survey of market towns across Britain, which show that out-of-town retail developments, futile traffic congestion measures, and housing sprawl around urban peripheries have had a devastating effect on the character of market towns over the past 15 years. “All it takes for blandness to triumph is to let events take their course,” said CPRE’s head of rural policy, Tom Oliver. Without action to reverse current trends, warned Oliver, “The richly distinctive character of our local landscapes will be gone forever”.³

More recently, distinctive local shops have come under threat from a more subtle threat – the high-street ‘micro-format’ supermarket stores that have begun to rapidly replicate on high streets up and down the country. Ironically, these powerful chains have leapt into the void left by the vanishing independent high-street retailers displaced by out-of-town shopping centres, as market saturation and planning restrictions make it less attractive to build big stores. There are already more than 50 small Sainsbury’s Local outlets and a hundred-plus Tesco Express stores, with the latter planning to open a further 1000 such outlets over the next five years.⁴

This introduction to the survey will show how the drift towards clone towns is rooted in much wider cultural and economic trends that are destroying diversity. In recent years biologists have begun talking about the fact that we are now living through a global mass extinction event – environmental degradation, expanding human populations and over-consumption by the rich are driving countless plant and animal species to extinction. But now it seems as that another mass extinction event may be occurring too – one affecting the character of the places we live, and the diversity at the heart of our culture, whether films, music, books or other media.

Clone Town Britain: the survey

nef has devised a method to see whether the place you live has become a clone town, is losing its identity, or has managed to retain its own character and distinctiveness. We conducted a number of pilots before rolling out the survey nationally. Some of these initial results follow and reveal a range of experiences across Britain. For these, an extended version of the national survey was used in 16 towns across Scotland, England and Wales.

The survey was performed by counting and categorising the retail outlets on the busiest parts of the main high street or high streets, according to type of outlet and type of ownership. The survey limits itself to surveying towns in the population range of 10,000 to 100,000 after which high streets become less representative of the whole town. The results of the small number of pilot surveys show that, generally, larger towns are more cloned. This might be explained by the sort of demographic tests that chain retailers apply before opening new stores. Here are representative highlights from the pilots.

Ashford

Verdict: Border Town

Ashford, Kent, is a market town that has outgrown itself and has little more identity than its status as a Eurostar terminal. Even Ashford Council's head of marketing and communications, Ian Hill, finds it hard to say anything too flattering about the town. In an interview with *New Start* magazine, walking around the town centre, he points out that the architecture is quite pleasant – as long as you keep looking up at the top of the buildings. *"The sense of identity has gone",* he admits, *"There's something soulless about the place. People want somewhere to feel a part of and meet their needs without being in a sterile environment. I think it's a nice little town, but it doesn't really know what it's trying to do, what it is about. It needs an identity for itself."*

Not surprisingly it's also on its way to becoming a clone town. The number of chain stores on the high street is just above 50 per cent, a development that could be further enhanced by Ashford Council's plans to double the town's population by new housing.⁵ Diversity on the high street is already very low. While there are a reasonable number of restaurants, clothes stores, and professional-services firms, there are few or no food retailers, leisure shops or dry cleaners.

Kirkcaldy

Verdict: Border Town

Walking down the high street in Kirkcaldy, Fife, bears little recognition of the fact that this was the birthplace of classical economist Adam Smith and the place where the Chancellor Gordon Brown was brought up. Not only has Kirkcaldy recently been named one of the poorest places in Britain, but our survey of the busiest part of its high street shows that it is on its way to becoming a clone town.⁶

The survey showed that over 50 per cent of the shops on Kirkcaldy's high street are chain stores, a quarter of which are clothing retailers. They account for over 75 per cent of the total number of clothing retailers, leaving little space for local enterprises to compete. In comparison, one quarter of the independently owned shops are restaurants, takeaways or cafés. In this category, chain stores only represent 10 per cent of the outlets, which leaves space for local competition.

Two new major shopping complexes sprung up in the outskirts of Kirkcaldy during the 1980s and '90s, adding further pressure to the high street. The presence of both B&Q and Homebase on the outskirts of the town might have something to do with the absence of DIY or builders' merchants on the high street. Local independent pharmacists and health-care outlets are also struggling, with one major chain store on the outskirts of town and several on the high street. Chain stores represent over 80 per cent of the pharmacy and health-care market on the high street.

Guildford

Verdict: Clone Town

Guildford, Surrey, prides itself on offering some of the best shopping in the South East, but little of the benefit trickles down to the local independent retailers. The main high streets consist almost exclusively of chain stores. According to one local shop owner, independent shops can no longer afford to stay on the high streets, as the rents are approximately four to five times what can be found on the side streets. Guildford also has a reputation for having the most expensive high-street rents in the country, second only to central London.

The difficulty for local independent shops trying to compete on the high streets has led to nearly 70 per cent dominance by chain stores, leaving local independent stores with just over 30 per cent of the market. The figures would be even starker if a shopping centre on one of the high streets was included, where almost all the

shops are chain stores. Over a quarter of all shops are clothing retailers. Little space is left available for other types of enterprises. Food retail represents less than two per cent of high-street outlets, and is all controlled by chain stores.

Lewes

Verdict: Home Town

Despite its location between London and Brighton, Lewes in East Sussex has so far managed to keep much of its traditional character and sense of individuality. A survey of the busiest part of the high street showed that locally owned independent stores were in the majority in most categories of outlet, only ousted by pharmacy and health-care stores and department and catalogue stores. In total, local independent shops represented over 70 per cent of the outlets in the high street. Even in categories where local shops often find it hard to compete, such as in retail clothing, local shop owners represented over 60 per cent of the outlets.

According to local shop owners, much of this is due to strict planning regulation, which prevents chain stores from getting the size of shop floors that they demand. In general, the size of shop floors and the frontage can further enhance the clone town feeling on high streets which have several chain stores. In Lewes, chain stores have even been known to pull out, due to shop floor restrictions, leaving some local shops with a better chance of survival.

But everything is not good news, however, and despite a bustling farmers' market and a successful organic greengrocer, there are few other food retailers around. The presence of a large Tesco not far from the high street is a probable influence. A large DIY/builders' merchant on the outskirts could also explain why there are so few in this category on the high street. One shop owner said that the competition from chain stores is making it hard to survive.

Bury St Edmunds

Verdict: Clone Town

The historic market town of Bury St Edmund, Suffolk, once the capital of East Anglia, and now perhaps best known for its beautiful churches and its yearly festival, has turned into a clone town. Whilst in the 1950s there were only a few chain stores, such as Woolworths, Boots and WH Smiths, chain stores now represent over 60 per cent of the outlets on the main high streets, most of which are clothing retailers. A flourishing street market every Wednesday and Saturday takes away some of the clone-town feeling, but if you want to find unique shops, as well as the public library and other key services, you will now have to walk further from the town's historic centre.

Bangor

Verdict: Home Town

Bangor, in the heartland of Welsh-speaking Wales, is the main shopping town in Gwynedd. Despite this – and its location on the mainline road and rail from London to Holyhead (for ferries to Dublin) – it shows a remarkably diverse high street, where almost 70 per cent of shops are independently owned. One of the few categories where chain stores are dominant is in retail clothing, but independent stores are not far behind. In general, most categories of outlets are represented, even in the more difficult sectors, such as food retailers. However, a new out-of-town retail park about a mile from the town centre, mainly consisting of chain stores, may have an influence on the retail structure of the town in the future.

Gloucester

Verdict: Clone Town

Gloucester city centre stands on the site of an old Roman fortress, but its main battle today seems to be over shoppers with the neighbouring town of Cheltenham. Perhaps as a result, Gloucester has become a clone town. A survey of the four main shopping streets which radiate from the market cross shows that over 60 per cent of the outlets are chain stores – a quarter of these are retail clothing stores, meaning that the overall diversity of the high street is skewed towards this type of outlet. As a result, other outlets, such as newsagents, DIY stores, dry cleaners, florists or travel agents, only have a limited presence or no presence at all. There are also a large number of banks, some with multiple sites, making access to disposable income as easy as possible.

Does it really matter?

Should the creep of clone towns be a cause for concern? After all, many of Britain's high streets retain a busy shopping parade, and overall retail sales have stayed buoyant over years. Some analysts suggest that chain stores thrive because they sell what people want to buy. Others assume that large chain stores stock a wider range of goods, providing consumers with greater choice.

The myth of choice

The insipid shopping parades that have colonised Britain's town centres conjure an illusion far cleverer than any devised by David Blaine. The modern British high street supposedly provides all things for all people: big brand outlets selling the latest global fashion wear; convenience stores that offer handy 'one-stop' shopping facilities, video stores offering the latest Hollywood blockbusters, and fast food chains to refuel after a hard day's shopping. The high-street fantasy is that we have reached the consumers' nirvana – unlimited choice.

However, like all magic tricks, the illusion of choice is now being exposed as a fraud. The subtle spread of clone towns is being mourned by many, as people become increasingly conscious that the appearance of another chain store on their high street provides them with little more than an additional outlet to buy exactly what everyone else is buying. Whether it's food, clothes, furniture, toys or stationery, the possibilities of finding unique and distinctive products fades a bit more each time a local retailer is replaced by a national or global chain.

Clones don't survive

The demise of retail diversity represents more than just a sentimental loss. The spread of Clone Town Britain presents a much more general threat to the viability of local economies and communities. Natural scientists since Charles Darwin have understood the value and importance of diversity in maintaining healthy and stable ecosystems. A diverse habitat gives rise to a range of both co-operative and competitive relationships between insects, flora and fauna in a given area; producing a state of equilibrium in which no one species is dominant and each has its distinct niche within the ecosystem. More importantly, it allows species to be resilient to change. The American biologist and author Barbara Kingsolver writes:

*"At the root of everything, Darwin said, is that wonder of wonders, genetic diversity. You're unlike your sister, a litter of pups is its own small Rainbow Coalition, and every grain of wheat in a field holds inside its germ a slightly separate destiny. You can't see the differences until you cast the seeds on the ground and grow them out, but sure enough, some will grow into taller plants and some shorter, some tougher, some sweeter... Genetic diversity, in domestic populations as well as wild ones, is nature's sole insurance policy."*⁷

There is a strong parallel between genetic diversity in the natural world and retail diversity on our high streets. Where loss of genetic diversity threatens the survival of species and makes natural ecosystems vulnerable to collapse, clone towns imperil





local livelihoods, communities and culture by decreasing the resilience of high streets to economic downturns and diminishing consumer choice.

The parallels between economic and ecological systems has been explored by the *eminence gris* of American community activists, Jane Jacobs. In *The Nature of Economies* she writes, "In an ecosystem, the essential contributions made within the (natural) conduit are created by diverse biological activities, the essential contributions made within the (economic) conduit are created by diverse economic activities." The degree of diversity, she argues, determines what benefits are left behind either after sunshine and rainfall, or when money gets spent in the local economy: "The practical link between economic development and economic expansion is economic diversity." The 'local multiplier effect' that consumer spending has in the local economy has been measured by **nef**. Results typically show that genuinely local stores have greater local benefits, and that there are good economic reasons for maintaining diversity on Britain's high streets.

Corporate culture and the loss of diversity

The same author on every shelf

Take the example of bookstores. Independent booksellers once thrived on Britain's high streets, with numerous shops catering to a variety of markets. In recent years, however, many of these have been forced to close due to the multiplication of large national and international chain bookstores. In 2001, the British Booksellers' Association reported that more than one in ten of Britain's independent bookshops had folded in the previous five years alone.⁸ Apart from reducing the number of specialist outlets, this trend has major repercussions across the entire book publishing and distribution industry, potentially limiting the choice of material that we as readers are able to access.

This is already happening in the United States where, by 1998, the American Booksellers' Association had grown so alarmed at the practices of the nation's largest book retail chains that it filed a lawsuit against Barnes & Noble and Borders, alleging that these companies were using their clout with publishers to obtain illegal deals and preferential treatment. The lawsuit claimed that these deals put independent bookstores at a serious competitive disadvantage and posed a threat both to their survival and to the diversity of American bookselling.

One of the plaintiffs in the suit, Clark Kepler, owner of Kepler's Books & Magazines in Menlo Park, California, stated: "This fight is about preserving what America is able to read. A network of healthy independent bookstores spurs publishers to produce a diversity of literature and to take risks with authors who are of less commercial but greater critical appeal. We believe that the dominance of the national chains, on the other hand, may influence publishers to focus primarily on the bottom line."⁹ If current trends continue, a similar scenario emerging in Britain is highly likely.

The same film on every screen

Cinemas are another example of the assault of clone towns on our cultural diversity. While more and more people are going to the cinema, the choice of films on view at any given one is being restricted to a similar set of heavily marketed Hollywood hits. This is happening even in the country's largest cities. In July 2003, a committee of the Greater London Authority was set up to investigate whether London's small independent cinemas were in danger of being forced out by large chains. According to *London Evening Standard*:

*"Of the estimated 100 cinemas in the capital – together boasting more than 450 screens – 45 are owned by four major franchises, UCI, UGC, Warner and The Odeon. But the four main franchises run more than two-thirds of London's cinema screens, and exercising a powerful hold over what the public sees."*¹⁰

Industry experts also fear that the tightening grip exercised by the four major distribution chains will mean fewer opportunities for home grown films, art-house features and foreign productions to find an outlet, squeezing the creative life out of the industry.

The same song on every radio

Over two decades, variety has been lost in the music industry with many of the classic names like Atlantic, Elektra, Decca, Giant, Polygram and Island being swallowed or folding. Since a controversial merger approved in July 2004, around 80 per cent of the global music market is now owned by just four companies: Universal, EMI, Warner Music and the newly merged Sony BMG. Universal and Sony BMG are now the two biggest music companies in the world, with about 25 per cent market share each. But even that does not represent their true grip: Sony BMG is owned by media giant Bertelsmann, Universal by fellow behemoth Vivendi.

When record companies merge, staff lose their jobs, artists are dropped and they lose control of their original material. Warner, for example, recently cut 1000 employees and is preparing to sack half of the 170 acts on their rosters.¹¹ In March 2004, EMI was reported to be cutting 1500 jobs, and dropping one-fifth of its recording artists. Niche and under-performing artists were reported to be on the way out. EMI said, "We believe that by concentrating our efforts on a tightened roster of artists we will increase our revenue-generating potential while reducing our costs."¹²

Performers' terms of trade with the big music companies have also worsened. With the advent of downloads, the music industry is suggesting that artists should only get half the royalties they would normally receive, around 5.5 per cent instead of the usual 11 per cent. The likely consequence will be that it becomes even more impossible for artists who do not instantly sell millions of albums to pay back promotional costs, suppressing diversity further as fewer artists are able to make a living from their craft.¹³

The big labels argue that anyone can start a record label. But when the conglomerates regularly buy up all available advertising slots at certain times of year, can buy four-minute 'commercials' in which to play their songs, and have the power to simply not play other companies' records on their proprietary radio stations, it's difficult to see how alternative sounds can get heard. "I don't think anybody anticipated that the pace would be so fast and so dramatic," says William Kennard, chairman of the Federal Communications Commission, the body who made the decision to deregulate TV and radio ownership in the US 1996, "The fundamental economic structure of the radio industry is changing from one of independently owned operators to something akin to a chain store."

On this scale and with these economics, it is more profitable for a music company to sell 10 million copies of one album, than a million copies each of 10 albums. So, companies constantly vie to sign a 'sure thing' pop act that will be marketed massively.

The old accolades 'Gold Album', (500,000 sales in the US) and 'Platinum' (one million sales) have become meaningless as music companies drop all but a few multi-million selling artists. Yet the big labels are often largely surviving on their



back catalogues of classic, long-lived artists who were developed over time and have survived its test. 'Pop Idol' is an example of the new strategy of exploiting a brand of bland homogenised pop music across a variety of platforms rather than take the risk of signing and developing a new talent – make the TV show, sell the music, market the magazines and replica dolls.¹⁴

Despite the fact that most of the music we listen to clearly has diverse cultural and national roots, such influences are extracted and applied to mildly freshen increasingly staid and standard Western pop formulas. And now that English is spoken by about 50 per cent of the world music market, with the imperative for tracks to sell in the millions, there is little room for music produced in other languages.¹⁵

The same views on all the news

Perhaps the most worrying homogenisation of all comes in the means that we have to learn about the world around us: the monopolisation of information by global 'giga-companies' whose interests spread far beyond the simple conveyance of facts and entertainment.

The ability to have an endless stream of information and entertainment at our fingertips has been heralded as one of the positive outcomes of globalisation. But, while access to news, leisure and special-interest information has broadened to encompass a wide array of broadcast, print and electronic media, the ownership base has narrowed as the industry has undergone rapid consolidation over the past 20 years.

Six massive conglomerates – Vivendi, Disney, Bertelsmann, Viacom, News Corporation, and AOL Time Warner – dominate global media and own not only the news itself but the satellite, internet and telecomms companies that distribute it, and many of the products and entertainment companies it publicises.

In the United States five corporations control 90 per cent of the news, and these same five corporations own many more media outlets and interests the world over. Rupert Murdoch's News International corporation, for example, publishes 175 newspapers in six countries,¹⁶ and owns about 800 companies around the world¹⁷ that include terrestrial and digital TV channels, news networks, newspapers, magazines, major book publishers like HarperCollins, film companies, sports teams and record companies.¹⁸

Where concerns about the health of democracy once focused on the relationship between the state, church and judiciary, now it is concentrated media influence that disconcerts. One of the most extreme examples of this symbiosis comes in Silvio Berlusconi's Italy, where the Prime Minister owns one of Europe's biggest media companies, Mediaset, and controls 90 per cent of Italian television and much of the print and electronic media. Berlusconi's empire spans newspapers, TV and radio, film, football, advertising, insurance, food and construction. An average Italian could spend a Saturday shopping at his local supermarket, relaxing in his home, reading a paper, before flicking through a few TV channels to watch AC Milan play football, and all these goods and services could have been provided by the same huge company.¹⁹

Sometimes it is straightforward corporate strategy based on self interest, rather than the dark world of conspiracy theory, that limits the space for diversity and discussion. A memo from Coke's advertising agency to magazines shows how the information agenda is narrowed down: "The Coca-Cola company requires that all insertions are placed adjacent to editorial that is consistent with each brand's marketing strategy... We consider the following subjects to be inappropriate: hard news, sex, diet, political issues, environmental issues... If an appropriate positioning option is not available, we reserve the right to omit our ad from that issue."²⁰



Declining diversity: a global phenomenon

It is now a political and social commonplace to talk about our increasingly globalised world, and the effect it has on everything from eating habits to work patterns.

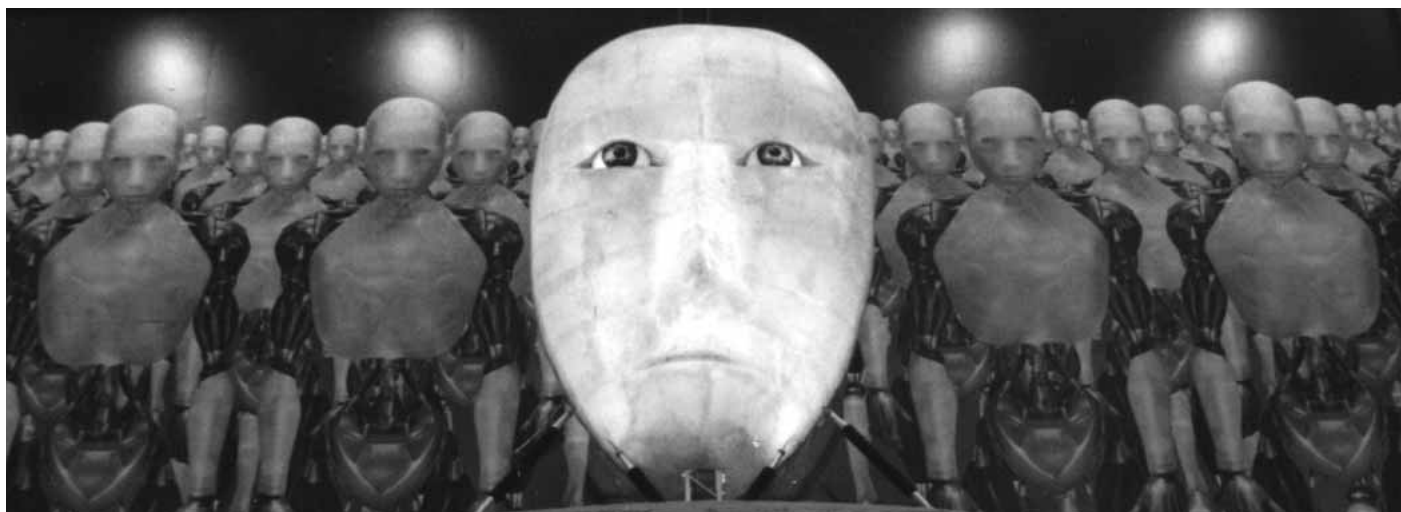
The more things change, the more they become the same

International monetary flows – now more deregulated than ever before – have delivered us a global culture where you can participate in the same 'consumer experience' from Los Angeles to Lagos – but only, of course, if you can afford it. From Bangor to Bangkok, it is possible to buy the same Burger King or pair of Jimmy Choo shoes, see the same advertisements, listen to identical music or catch the latest Hollywood movie.

"Eclecticism is the degree zero of contemporary general culture: one listens to reggae, watches a western, eats McDonald's food for lunch and local cuisine for dinner, wears Paris perfume in Tokyo and 'retro' clothing in Hong Kong; knowledge is a matter of TV games. It is easy to find a public for eclectic works." Jean Francois Lyotard

The result is a world of growing homogeneity and blandness, where local difference, flavour and colour is erased in the pursuit of uniformity, and where big business sets the aesthetic agenda – be it in architecture, physical appearances, fashion or foodstuffs. Clone towns and clone cultures are spreading across the globe.

Anxieties about social 'homogenisation' are nothing new and often suffer an elitist edge. Early twentieth century critics and writers like T.S. Eliot and Ezra Pound fulminated against the growth of mass culture that turned the democratic impulses of Enlightenment into nothing more than industrial sprawl and mass-production. The huge growth of the urban realm in the nineteenth century – and its accompanying service and leisure industries, (the first department stores Debenhams, Selfridges and others, proliferated during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries) led to fears that traditional notions of community were being fragmented by consumerism. H.G. Wells, Aldous Huxley, George Orwell and others all wrote nightmare visions of a future world that would conform increasingly under unidentified totalitarianisms – and that would determine the life and consumer



choices of the 'masses'. The masses would then walk, zombie-like, into a tyranny of unfettered capital with its constraint of free life, thought and choice.

So why are contemporary anxieties about homogenisation and the loss of diversity any different from the class-bound observations of the last century? It is a question of scale. We now live at a moment in history when the power, concentration and international reach of big business makes resistance to dominant market systems so challenging that even the most dystopic critic of the last century would despair.

The statistics bear this out. Take just one example – the growth of Wal-Mart from a one-man general store a little more than 40 years ago to the vast, global brand of today which employs more than 920,000 staff in the US alone. It has over 100 million customers per week, 4000 stores worldwide and every three days the world is treated to a new Wal-Mart opening.²¹

Wal-Mart has a very global vision. It started its hostile invasion in Mexico in 1991, and extended its reach across the Americas during the 1990s (Brazil, Argentina, Canada and Puerto Rico), before bearing east to China and Indonesia. It is now firmly embedded in Europe, especially in Germany and the UK, where it took over the supermarket chain Asda in 1999.

The Wal-Mart policy of out-of-town developments and stack-'em-high sell-'em-cheap retail wears high streets down. High-street retail is a fragile ecosystem. Truly locally owned enterprise always struggles against the might of big supermarket chains.

According to one US study, "In the 10 years after Wal-Mart moved into Iowa, the state lost over 555 grocery stores, 298 hardware stores, 293 building suppliers, 161 variety stores, and 158 women's clothing stores, 153 shoe stores, 116 drug stores and 111 children's clothing stores. In total some 7326 businesses went to the wall."²²

Even though Wal-Mart's presence in the UK is limited to Asda, the UK is doing a pretty good job of destroying its own local retail. Recent reports show that of every £7 of retail spending in the UK, £1 is spent in just one major supermarket – Tesco. Large grocery outlets dominate the UK food retail sector, with just a handful of operators having over 81 per cent of the food market. Supermarkets dominate the UK food system and have their own listed suppliers and distribution networks. Thus they not only control the type and way we consume food – they also operate a stranglehold over producers, abattoirs and food-processing operatives.

Intensive mass-food production policies are having a knock-on effect on environmental diversity too. Industrial farming clones the landscape into regulation, large-field sizes growing a handful of crops. Pollution, too, is having a devastating effect on natural, as well as economic, diversity. According to the Department for Environment, Food, and Rural Affairs (DEFRA's) own statistics, intensive farming and subsequent loss of habitat means that farmland bird numbers remain at less



than 60 per cent of the 1970 level, and certain species (such as the lesser spotted woodpecker) are down by as much as 75 per cent of 1970 levels.²³

On a global scale, according to research published in the science periodical *Nature* in January 2004, climate change caused by intensive fossil fuel use over the next 50 years is expected to make a quarter of land animals and plants extinct – with more than one million species lost by 2050.²⁴

The industrialisation of eating

It's not just the loss of retail diversity and the growth of big business chains that are creating clone towns. It's also aesthetic, architectural, agricultural, natural, and civic diversity that is being lost in our pursuit of global mono-culture.

One highly visible example of this phenomenon has been the exponential rise in the sales of fast food. Americans now spend over \$110 billion per year on fast food – more than they do on higher education. According to Eric Schlosser, author of *Fast Food Nation*, "They spend more on fast food than on movies, books, magazines, newspapers, videos and recorded music – combined."²⁵

Schlosser says our relationship with fast food has transformed and standardised not only our diets, but our landscape, car use, economy, workforce, and popular culture. It has fostered swathes of farmland being turned over to grazing and intensive farming of livestock; it has 'liberated' the traveller and car driver who can now 'eat on the go'; and it has provided millions of McJobs worldwide.

One of the most obvious negative side-effects of the loss of dietary diversity is levels of global obesity. Scientists at Princeton University have claimed that fast food is as addictive as heroin – lab rats exhibited the shakes when removed from a high-sugar-and-fat feeding pattern akin to a high-fast-food-content diet in humans.²⁶ This probably in part accounts for the phenomenal global success of fast-food brands – and the consequent obesity levels they are spawning.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) launched a drive at the beginning of 2004 calling for lower daily recommendations of fat, sugar and salt, as weight-related deaths are likely to double over the next 20 years. The statistics are stark:

- Over 30,000 deaths per year are caused by obesity in England alone – with an estimated annual cost to the NHS of £500 million.
- Adult obesity rates in the UK have tripled since 1982 – with 19 per cent of adult Britons currently classified as obese and 39 per cent as overweight.
- This is a global phenomenon – with worldwide obesity rates shooting up 50 per cent in the last decade alone.²⁷



One of the most compelling reasons for preserving cultural diversity is its link to biological diversity. Many cultural traditions are simply the result of generations of people learning how to live in a given place successfully. People who live in deserts learn how to conserve water and how to grow crops without it. Different cultures, then, are societies' responses to different ecosystems and, by definition, must be sustainable to survive. It is no coincidence that the places with the greatest cultural diversity are the same places with the highest biodiversity; and the same places where each is most threatened, especially in this age of rapid globalisation. If we humans are to keep our planet's ecosystems intact, we would be well advised also to keep our cultural systems intact.²⁸

Cloning beauty: the search for perfect banality

Another way in which a uniform global standard is emerging is through the increasing use of plastic surgery worldwide. Here the trend seems to be toward the spread of a cloned, mostly white, Anglo-Saxon model of beauty. The USA is still by far the largest global consumer of plastic surgery procedures – with breast augmentation the most popular operation – but the rest of the world is rapidly catching up.

According to the International Society of Aesthetic Plastic Surgery, citizens of the USA underwent 90,992 'aesthetic' procedures in 2002; but they were followed by Mexico (with 52,956), Brazil (47,957) and Japan (42,842). One of the most popular procedures in Japan is for women to have their eyes 'widened' to look 'more Western'.²⁹ And, according to a survey of British women conducted earlier this year by Abbey financial group, nearly 60 per cent of women would consider borrowing money for cosmetic surgery. In parts of East Asia, skin whitening creams are amongst the most popular beauty products, allowing darker-skinned Asian women to also look 'more Western'. In the Philippines, television adverts even marketed nose pegs that can be inserted in one's nostrils to give a more European-shaped nose.

Part of this 'drive to perfection' is the tremendous influence of 'perfect' popular cultural icons from films and catwalks. The ubiquity of Hollywood films – and their somewhat two-dimensional view of human attractiveness – is spreading. In the post-war period, European critics like Theodore Adorno and Guy Debord feared the spectre of Hollywood mass culture and its potential for global cultural, aesthetic, and economic standardisation – but even they could not have imagined the impact it would have on the self-image of, say, an office worker in Korea.

Visual monotony

Sergei Eisenstein remarked that "American capitalism finds its sharpest and most expressive reflection in American cinema", and in terms of its global reach this still holds true. A handful of film and music companies control roughly 85 per cent of global output – with English as the dominant language. The same is true of the

internet – 13 of the world's top 14 internet firms are American – number 14 is British, according to a report commissioned for a recent UN Conference on Trade and Development.

In fact the entertainment industry is America's biggest export – with the Walt Disney Corporation at number seven of the world's top 100 brands (after the inevitable Coca Cola and Microsoft). Although recent years have shown a mini boom in non-Hollywood film production, one of the main problems for independent films is how to get them shown. For although in 2002 alone the seven leading global cinema chains opened 650 screens in Western Europe – with UCI accounting for 40 per cent of new openings, the key driver behind this growth is the multiplex – usually located in an out-of-town shopping mall. This has accounted for 47 per cent of new cinema growth.

However, most of the big cinema corporations have intimate links with big Hollywood production houses, so it can be difficult for small, independent film makers to get their work distributed, other than through small art house cinemas or the few remaining independents.

The fact that programme content has become increasingly driven by advertiser demands for mass audiences is widely acknowledged amongst media critics. The renowned writer and academic Noam Chomsky spells out the central place of advertising in corporate mass media: "Whether it is television or newspapers, or whatever, they are selling audiences. Corporations sell audiences to other corporations. In the case of the elite media, it's big business."³⁰

Mark Cooper, research director of the Consumer Federation of America, discusses the consequences of this situation as media ownership becomes more concentrated and programming becomes centralised: "News departments get reduced, and culturally diverse and public interest programming comes under pressure. Less popular programming disappears and journalists are evaluated by the corporate-profit-center logic of these huge organizations."³¹

This is a problem that was highlighted by local television broadcasters in the US.

In March of 2001, the Network Affiliated Stations Alliance (NASA) submitted a petition to the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) against network practices. NASA, which represents local broadcasters affiliated with the large corporate networks (which include ABC, CBS, NBC and Fox), complained that: "The balance of power between networks and affiliates has shifted overwhelmingly in the direction of the networks." This, it claimed, means that the stations' "ability to select community-appropriate programming... is significantly undermined".³²

Similar problems are now being experienced in Europe. Peter Humphreys, of the University of Manchester, shows that there is also consistent evidence from across Europe that the competition for advertising amongst commercial broadcasters across the EU has led to an increasingly heavy reliance on "low cost entertainment fare", once again squeezing out diversity. Worryingly, these pressures also have the effect of dragging down the quality of programming on European public broadcasting corporations.

Perhaps the country that best illustrates this risk is Italy. Silvio Berlusconi's Mediaset empire has been accused of bringing the standard of Italian print and broadcast media down to the lowest common denominator, dragging its competition in both private public broadcasting down with it. Following Berlusconi's re-election in 2001, Carlo Freccero, the Director of Rai 2,³³ launched an astonishing attack on the Italian Premier, blaming him not only of dumbing down broadcasting, but of undermining the country's social fabric. Freccero complained bitterly that in Berlusconi's Italy, "There is no place for minorities". He continued, "The only yardstick is success. It's the cult of the majority. Good taste is now the taste of the masses. Instead of joining the Communist party or going to church, the majority of consumers find their place in commercial television – the only social space recognised as valid. Too bad for culture, for memory, for individual thought."³⁴

But there is a larger issue around the role of global corporate mass media as a conduit of information and (mis)understanding across cultures. The companies that own or control the majority of Western media concerns also have a dominant presence in other parts of the world, notably Central and South America and Asia. Although in competition with each other for market shares and advertising revenue, these companies reflect a broadly similar cultural worldview. So, despite the diversity of their audiences, the news and entertainment programmes broadcast by the global media conglomerates tend to reflect a relatively narrow set of perspectives and values.

Even more, this flow of cultural messaging tends to be largely one-way, with Western viewers rarely seeing or hearing cultural perspectives that differ from their own. This has led to a high level of resentment in some countries about the imposition of a Western consumer 'monoculture'. In his analysis of Singapore, the writer Ziauddin Sardar argues that this incessant messaging has become internalised into how people feel they should act, speak and consume. "Success", he argues, "means inculcating globalized manners, mores and values, as seen on TV. Consequently, internalising global identity means eradicating what comes naturally."³⁵

Speaking fewer tongues

Diverse cultures have bred and sustained numerous varieties of crops, livestock, and habitats. By the same token, the loss of certain crops, the replacement of traditional crops with export crops, the extinction of species embedded in religion, mythology, or folklore, and the degradation or conversion of homelands are cultural as well as biological losses. Since 1900, experts say about one Indian tribe has disappeared from Brazil each year. Almost one half of the world's 6000 languages may die out in the next 100 years. Of the 3000 languages expected to survive for a century, nearly half will probably not last much longer.³⁶ According to UNESCO:

- Of the world's 6000 languages, just four per cent are used by 96 per cent of the world's population. Furthermore, 50 per cent of the world's languages are in danger of extinction.
- Ninety per cent of the world's languages are not represented on the Internet.
- Some five countries monopolize the world cultural industries trade. In the field of cinema, for instance, 88 countries out of 185 in the world have never had their own film production.³⁷

This model of globalisation has become the winning model of life, one that is being spread to the remotest corners of the globe. And as it spreads, it carries with it a culturally specific ideology of money, competition, and individualism. The human being, the environment, different cultures, are all considered secondary aspects that can be either utilized or displaced if they try to oppose the process, whose strength is enhanced by the self-fulfilling general belief that there is no alternative – unsurprising as the alternatives, on their own terms, go largely unseen and unheard.

As such, emerging clone towns across the world share the same seeds of their loss of identity. The reckless pursuit of 'sameness' is destroying communities and wiping out diversity, and may yet prove more damaging than previously imagined.

The 'other' side to imposing dominant cultures is a reaction – sometimes violent – against them. Universal food, fashion, language and aesthetic styles in the global pursuit of profit and 'sameness' are seen by some communities as a new imperialism: a form of domination that is predicated on devaluing their own, local way of life.

Perhaps the defence of the local is the most constructive way to resist the inexorable rise of a clone-town world. In some instances, however, the imposition of one model has begun to produce reactions that can be violent and destructive. And there is no reason to believe that these outbreaks will diminish. On the contrary, they are likely to grow in size and number as the pressure to conform increases.

In reaction a 'cultural fundamentalism' can form: then everything that is external to a culture is rejected and only one's own way of life and one's own religion or values have a place.³⁸



Bringing it back home

Reversing the spread of clone towns, and the associated impacts on local economies and cultures, is central to the long-term sustainability of Britain's communities. In those communities where business is said to be 'thriving', this often means no more than a collection of faceless chains or fake 'local' supermarkets who suck local money out of the community and send it to a remote group of shareholders. It certainly doesn't circulate in the local economy, providing jobs, local colour and diversity.

But there are moves to halt the seemingly inexorable slide into Clone Town Britain. In 2002, **nef** launched a unique new coalition called Local Works representing everyone from small business associations, to community groups and organisations dealing with problems like health and homelessness. Its objective is to fight the decline of local communities and their economies, arguing that local people and authorities are the best placed to determine the way that their neighbourhoods develop.

Central government has always paid lip service to local communities having more devolved power. But it has rarely delivered on this pledge – and the UK remains one of the most centralised states in Europe. Many local authorities, health authorities and other public bodies feel more controlled than ever by targets set by the central powers of Whitehall.

That is why **nef** is promoting the case for an all-party localism Bill in the House of Commons, which currently enjoys the support of over one third of MPs. The Bill

aims to free more funding for local authorities and give them and the communities they serve more say in how it is spent. Local authorities, in consultation with their local communities, would set local priorities – perhaps through existing mechanisms like community strategies or Local Agenda 21. Then the Government would be obliged to free up more funding to meet those local sustainability strategies.

Once, people thought that organic food was just another fad; now it is seen as modern, healthy and the future of farming. Local has become to economics what organic came to mean for food. It is increasingly a way of suggesting that something is modern and authentic. Cashing in on this trend, and with no apparent irony, one of the biggest international banks describes itself as ‘the world’s local bank’. That may be an abuse of the ‘local’ idea, but with the latest communication technologies it is more possible than ever for many different distinct local identities to co-exist in a truly international atmosphere.

Rather than globalisation meaning that everybody wears, eats, watches, and listens to the same thing – or indeed uses the same remotely controlled bank – localism means that we can all learn from each other and, at the same time, celebrate our diversity. Localism does not hark back to some golden age when ‘things were better’, because often they never were. It does, however, lay the foundations for the future becoming better.

Such a model would not be against international trade: It would favour more localised production and consumption because of the benefits this brings to local communities. However, trade that is wasteful, oppressive, counter-productive, and a rip-off for poor countries and people everywhere living in poverty would be seen as a bad thing. Under the current system, global markets have failed to close the gap between rich and poor. Other mechanisms are needed to do that and to halt the destruction of diversity. Producing on a large scale for big chain businesses and for export can skew the benefits of economic activity away from the poorest people, and displace, like a cuckoo in the nest, smaller scale and more diverse local economic activities that benefit the poorest people more.

According to at least one Nobel-Prize-winning economist, Maurice Allais, developing mutually sustainable local and regional markets will in many cases be a more reliable foundation for successful local economic development than becoming dependent on unpredictable and volatile international markets, which is the current reality.³⁹

If we live in a safe area with a good range of facilities, where we feel like we belong and that our material and social needs will be broadly met, we will have a better quality of life – and health. Conversely, if we feel insecure and find dealing with distant service providers stressful and difficult, our quality of life will be undermined. If we feel we are listened to and that we can influence how our local area develops, then that is better still.

This report is intended to add to the argument that proper local, devolved power is the best foundation and future for local economies to really belong to local communities. It is also the best safeguard for vibrant local democracy and strong local government; and it shows that economic priorities should be indivisible from social concerns. It is for these reasons that the loss of diversity and the spread of clone towns must be halted.

Conclusion: resistance is far from futile

nef's Clone Town Britain Survey should provide a snapshot of how far the trend towards loss of local identity has gone. However bad the picture is, there are plenty of things that can be done to prevent the replication of bland brands from suffocating our high streets.

The backlash against blandness

In the town of Carmel, California, made famous by having film star Clint Eastwood as mayor, a bye law was passed banning formula restaurants. The territory of Western Australia has an aggressive buy local policy to help local enterprises stand up to big business. Writing in his book *Authenticity: brands, fakes, spin and the lust for real life*, author David Boyle describes how Ocean Beach in California banned chain stores.

The town of Homer in Alaska banned what it describes as 'big-box' stores. US-based Institute for Local Self Reliance reported on how the giant supermarket chain Kroger, "caused an uproar when it announced plans to build a 94,000-square-foot Fred Meyer store in an area the city hoped to develop as a community green space and town square. "The town center should reflect the people who live and work here," said resident Steve Powell. "There's nothing about Fred Meyer that reflects the town's heart or history." The City Council passed a temporary moratorium on large-scale retail development and appointed a task force to recommend criteria and regulations for large stores."

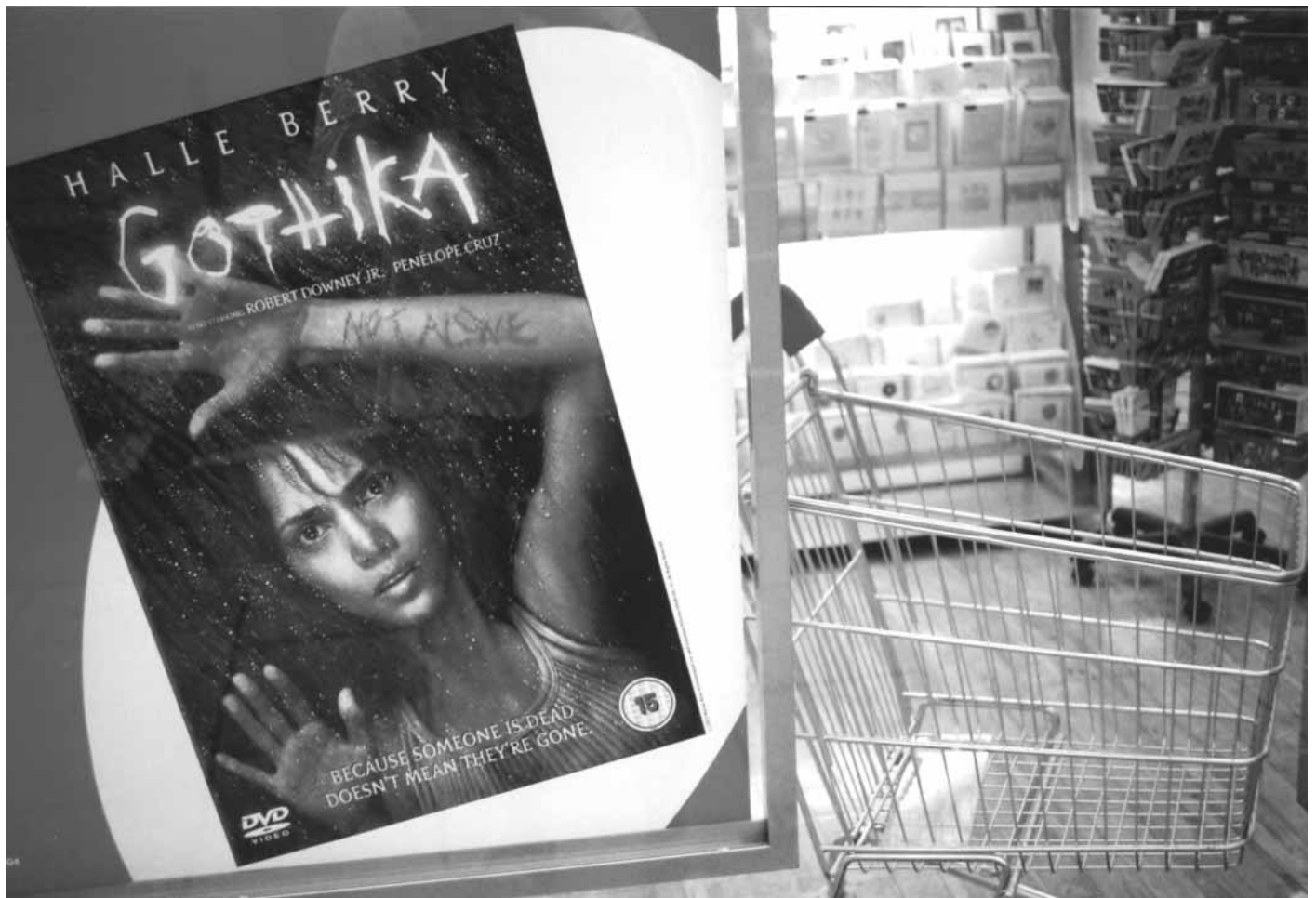
In France, local authorities can veto the construction of any supermarket over 1000 square metres and, in 1996, a law was introduced which requires a public enquiry for the construction of any outlet exceeding 6000 square metres, in order to protect 'the social and economic cohesion and the fabric of society'.

In response to growing complaints about small shops being threatened by an influx of foreign supermarkets, Poland has enacted its own version of the French Royer law. Local authorities can now veto new shopping centers.

All around the world a backlash is growing against the kind of market concentration that destroys diversity. Malaysia placed a five-year ban on the construction of hypermarkets in Klang Valley, which includes Kuala Lumpur, and the states of Johor and Penang. New guidelines also lengthen the approval time for developers seeking to build hypermarkets in other areas from four months to two years.

The global chains Carrefour, Tesco, Makro, and Ahold operate hypermarkets in Malaysia. In announcing the new policy, Minister of Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin said that the three regions are saturated with hypermarkets and additional development of large stores would adversely impact thousands of small businesses.

In Cuernavaca, 50 miles south of Mexico City, residents fought against plans by the retail American giant Costco to build a new store on a historically significant site that is home to the former Hotel Casino de la Selva, more than 900 century-old



trees, and dozens of murals. Cuernavaca's sunny climate has earned it the nickname 'the city of eternal spring', but residents contend that uncontrolled retail sprawl is reducing Cuernavaca to 'the city of the eternal shopping mall'. They believe a park would be a far better option for the Costco site. The protests came to a head in late August 2002. After the city gave Costco the official go-ahead, some 300 protesters blocked roads to prevent construction crews from reaching the site. The police beat and arrested several protesters. Within hours 3000 people converged to demand their release. They were let out several days later and organised a massive rally of more than 15,000 people.

On 15 July 2003, citizens in Carbondale, Colorado, voted 57 to 43 per cent to reject a 23,400 square-metre shopping center anchored by a Target store. The hotly debated referendum produced the largest election turnout in the town's history.

Our observations to date suggest that proper local, devolved power is the best foundation and future for local economies to really belong to, and meet the needs of, local communities. Dynamic and diverse local economies also seem to be an essential safeguard for vibrant local democracy and strong local government. The research that went into Ghost Town Britain⁴⁰ showed that economic priorities should be indivisible from social concerns. Results from the Clone Town Britain Survey will, we hope, reveal the importance of these issues for our cultural life and the streets that we walk down each day.

A potential manifesto to breathe life back into Britain's local economies

Community veto of chain stores: Local communities and authorities should have the ability, following other international experiences, to ban new chain stores from high streets.

Support the Sustainable Communities Bill: Based on a bottom-up philosophy, the Bill would create a coherent framework for pro-local policies. This would give local authorities, communities and citizens a powerful voice in planning their future to guarantee dynamic and environmentally sustainable local economies. Towards the end of 2003, the Bill had won the support of over one third of members of parliament at Westminster.

Rate relief for small retailers: Priority assistance should be given to locally owned high-street shops contending with out-of-town and edge-of-town superstores.

Local competition policy: Competition policy, normal at the national level, could be applied at the local level to prevent market abuse by big name retailers. The UK Government could also enact legislation to ensure that local communities have the final word in any decision on whether to allow the construction of a large shopping centre exceeding a certain size.

Mandatory code of conduct for supermarkets: A mandatory code of conduct could be introduced and enforced by a food retail regulator. This would scrutinise both the supermarkets' relationships with their suppliers and the degree of market control which the large multiple chains hold over the food retail-market.

Local money flows' analysis: Local authorities and public agencies should use tools such as those developed by **nef** to track local spending, and then favour local retailers whose businesses ultimately leave more money re-circulating in the local economy of especially poor areas. This would provide an indication of how different types of retail planning and/or public procurement strategies can reduce or augment money flows within the local economy – to keep more where it is needed in poor neighbourhoods.

Local retail plans: These could be along the lines of regulations in the Republic of Ireland, which cap the size of supermarkets, ensure that town centres are the primary focus for development, and require local authorities to develop retail plans for their area.

Support for Community Development Finance Initiatives (CDFIs): Particular attention needs to be paid to those who face barriers to accessing start-up and growth credit, including those from ethnic minorities.

Community banking: This idea has received the support of academics and banking experts. Steps should be taken to develop pilot schemes in communities currently without a bank, or those facing the closure of their sole remaining branch.

Community pharmacies: The Government should follow its own agenda of 'joined-up thinking' by further enhancing the role of community pharmacists; they should be allowed to take on a broader public health role and some of the doctors' prescribing powers.

National inventory of community buildings: There's an urgent need to establish a mechanism to undertake such an exercise and track it on an annual basis.

Greater support to local authorities to maintain public open spaces: Local authorities need greater power and resources to better protect and maintain these spaces, and to help them instigate enforcement against illegal encroachment on common land.

Further reading on the local economy

Order on www.neweconomics.org

- The Money Trail: Measuring your impact on the local economy using LM3
- Plugging the Leaks
- Ghost Town Britain: The threat from economic globalisation to livelihoods, liberty and local economic freedom
- Ghost Town Britain II: Death on the high street
- Ghost Town: A lethal prescription
- Regulating micro-finance: A global perspective
- Bootstraps or Braces? The Regulation of Community Development Finance Institutions
- Green Cities: and why we need them
- The Case for Community Banking
- A Proposed Performance and Accountability Framework for Community Development Finance in the UK

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Do you live in a Clone Town? Do the survey.

To test the state of Britain's high streets, **nef** has piloted a series of surveys in towns up and down the country to see how they fare on our Clone Town Scale.

The Clone Town Britain Survey is designed to help broadly quantify the loss of diversity and assess whether a given location feels like a 'Home Town' or a 'Clone Town'. Your Home Town is a place that retains its individual character and is instantly recognisable and distinctive to the people who live there, as well as those who visit. A Clone Town, in contrast, is a place that has had its individual high-street shops replaced by a monochrome strip of global and national chains and could easily be mistaken for dozens of other bland town centres across the country. In between are the Border Towns. These are being pulled towards the same bland monotony as Clone Towns but still retain important vestiges of their local character.

We'd like you to do the survey in your own town and send your results to us at:

Clone Town Britain Survey, **new economics foundation**
3 Jonathan Street, London SE11 5NH

Or fax it to us on 020 7820 6301

Results of our national survey will be published in 2005.

Home Town or Clone Town?

The Clone Town Britain Survey is designed by **nef** (the new economics foundation) to determine whether your town is a Clone Town indistinguishable from dozens of others around the country; or a genuine Home Town that is distinctive and recognisable as a unique place. The Clone Town Britain Survey is simple and can be used in any town in the UK. It should take no more than 30 minutes and can be completed while strolling along your local high street.

How to do the Survey

I) The route

Start at the place you consider to be the high street of your town – a street where most of the shops are concentrated. To do the Survey you simply need to walk along the high street and record the first 50 shops you pass (you can start at any point on the high street). Services such as post-offices, banks, benefit offices, job centres, doctors' surgeries and public buildings should not be counted.

II) Filling in the Survey

As you walk along the high street, fill in the form on the reverse side of this page. For each shop, you should note down:

- The type of shop
- Whether the shop is independently owned, or a part of regional, national or international chain.

The ownership of the shops on your high street is crucial to understanding its homeliness or 'cloneliness'. If you're not sure, go in and ask one of the staff.

III) The scoring

Once you have filled in the survey for 50 shops on your high street, you are ready to score your town and see whether it is, or is on its way to becoming, a clone town. This is determined by the number of different types of shops (i.e. diversity), and the number of chain stores versus independently owned shops (i.e. identity). Follow the simple steps below to calculate your town's score:

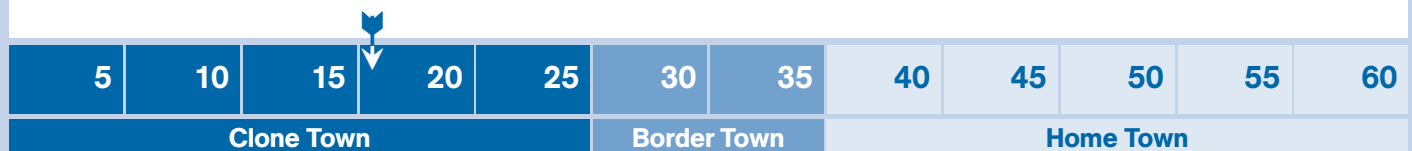
1. For each **type of shop** counted on your high street, give **5 points**.
2. For each **independently owned shop** counted on your high street, give **50 points**.
3. For each **chain store** counted on your high-street, give **5 points**.
4. Add up the scores from steps 1–3 and divide the total sum by the number of shops counted (i.e. 50).

Example: 'Blandton'

A survey of 50 shops carried out on the high street of 'Blandton' found 18 different types of shops. It also revealed that, out of the 50 shops counted, 10 were independently owned and 40 were chains. 'Blandton' therefore received the following score:

$$(18 \times 5) + (10 \times 50) + (40 \times 5) = 790 \qquad 790 / 50 = 15.8$$

With a score of 15.8 we see that 'Blandton' is indeed a Clone Town!



Please return completed surveys to:

Clone Town Britain Survey, **new economics foundation**, 3 Jonathan Street, London SE11 5NH Fax: 020 7820 6301

Clone Town Britain Survey

Town: _____ Name of high street: _____

SHOP COUNT

TYPE OF SHOP	Independently owned	Chain store
1 Food retailer (butcher, baker, supermarket, etc.)		
2 Newsagents/tobacconists		
3 Stationery/books		
4 Department and catalogue stores		
5 Restaurant/takeaway/fast food/coffee shop		
6 Pub/bar		
7 Off licence		
8 Professional (insurance, accountancy, legal, etc.)		
9 Estate agents		
10 Health care shop/pharmacy		
11 Household items (furniture, kitchen, etc.)		
12 Clothing retailer (shoes, accessories, etc.)		
13 Cinema/theatre		
14 Electronic/IT (TVs, phones, computers, etc.)		
15 Pet shop/pet supplies/vets		
16 Barbers/hair salons/beauticians and cosmetics		
17 Toys/sports/cycling/outdoor leisure		
18 Mechanics/car accessories/petrol station		
19 Music/games/DVD/video (includes rentals)		
20 DIY/builders' merchant		
21 Garden centre/florists		
22 Dry cleaning/laundrette		
23 Travel agents		
24 Camera/photo developing shops		
25 Other (betting shop, casino, taxis, antiques, watch repairers, charity shop, cobblers, jewellers, etc.)		
TOTAL		

Points

Number of types of shops _____ x5 = _____

Number of independently owned shops _____ x50 = _____

Number of chain stores _____ x5 = _____

Total points _____

CLONE TOWN SCORE

Total points / Number of shops = Score

/ 50 =

CLONE TOWN RATING

5	10	15	20	25	30	35	40	45	50	55	60
Clone Town					Border Town		Home Town				

Please return completed surveys to:

Clone Town Britain Survey, **new economics foundation**, 3 Jonathan Street, London SE11 5NH Fax: 020 7820 6301

One of the other things we do



Current priorities include international debt, transforming markets, global finance and local economic renewal



Local Works: Local people must be put back at the heart of their economies. Policies that favour the large and remote are threatening the vibrancy and diversity of our communities, bringing Ghost Town Britain. Giving real power to local people can reinvigorate our rural and urban economies.

nef is leading this campaign characterised by a highly diverse membership that seeks to combat the spectre of 'Ghost Town Britain'. It promotes the importance of local sustainability and self-determination. For example, Local Works was a big part of the campaign to defend community pharmacies. Taking as a starting point the fact that local communities should be more in charge of their own economies, education, healthcare, consumer and leisure needs, Local Works is campaigning for a legal framework that can make this happen.

The needs of communities must be at the heart of environmental, social and political justice. At a time of growing disenchantment with political processes, individuals and communities can and should have a real impact on how money is spent in their communities and what they invest in. Having a tangible impact on the delivery of services is a vital tool for political, social, environmental and economic reinvigoration in all of our communities.

Local Works recognises that there is no single blueprint, but that communities should draw up and implement their own plans to achieve these goals.

**For more information please call
020 7820 6300**

Acknowledgments

The report was written and researched by Molly Conisbee, Petra Kjell, Julian Oram, Jessica Bridges-Palmer, Andrew Simms and John Taylor.

Thanks are due to many people who helped with the pilot surveys in various ways, these include: Perry Walker, Steven Wraith, Anne-Marie Davies, Jenny Margrett, Mr & Mrs Clark, Daniel Start, Noel Longhurst, David Paynter, Mary Elliott, Bryan Thompson, John Donaldson, Tricia Bridges Palmer, G B Ticehurst.

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Photographs by Andrew Simms and Mary Murphy.

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Design: the Argument by Design – www.tabd.co.uk

Registered charity number 1055254
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ISBN 1 899407 90 1